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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- CC: Classic Chips

With Contributions by:

Carl Forhan

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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Naturally the weather has been better this past week compared to the past two while I was on vacation! The humidity came roaring back with a vengeance; and the sun did appear from time to time. It would have been fine had this been one of my vacation weeks! Maybe in a couple of weeks, the weather will be good for my last summer vacation. I'm not taking bets!

The atmosphere in the department where I work is really dreary. As word continues to spread of our department manager's notice to leave, spirits continue to decline. Yes, it's quite common for people to leave a job for various reasons. However, people don't usually leave a good position after more than 10 years unless it's due to changes in life (moving, etc.) or an incredible new offer elsewhere. However, over the past few years there has been the continued atmosphere at most businesses and organizations to increase revenues while reducing costs (do more work with less staff). The stress factor is high - people are leaving good positions because of it. It happens, and I understand it. Doesn't mean I have to like it. I've been with this healthcare facility for over 20 years. I've seen management come and go. My particular boss happens to be one who has probably had the most positive impact on our department than anyone before him. It will be difficult once he's gone. I'm sure many of you have experienced similar situations at one point. Oh well, I guess life goes on.

Enough of my ramblings for one week. I didn't really have much to say this week. It's been fairly quiet on the computing front this week. But, with the summer winding down and the new school year rapidly approaching, the news should rebound nicely in a few weeks!

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. In my never-ending quest to get the most I can out of my faithful TT, I just ordered (and received) a 3.5 gig hard drive for it.

This sucker is a monster, folks. Most people have probably never seen a hard drive this size. It's a 5.25 inch, full height drive. That's right, FULL HEIGHT. And 3.5 gig is the unformatted capacity.... it always amazed me that they listed what the unformatted capacity is. Who cares what the UNFORMATTED capacity is? The formatted capacity is a measly

2.9 gigabytes. I think I can live with that for a while. <grin>

My intentions for this drive are to get Linux up and running once and for all. The drive I had intended to use for Linux unceremoniously died as I was partitioning it. Needless to say I was fit to be tied about that. I had been promising myself and others that I would finally get Linux set up good and proper and write an installation text for it. Losing that hard drive put me behind for three days. Since I was on vacation this week, it put a real dent in my timetable. But I guess that, since I had planned on just hanging around the house for this vacation, it wasn't really too much of a dent.

Anyway, I hope to have more information and thoughts about Linux (a UNIX-like operating system) on the TT for you before too much longer. I know, I know, you've heard that from me before. But I think that, this time, it's gonna happen.

I've been using Linux on my PC laptop for almost a year now, and I like it... well, to be fair, I like it a lot more than Windows. It still ain't TOS, but what are ya gonna do?

The thing that excites me about using Linux on the TT is that it opens up a whole new resource for programs and applications. If a program is designed for m68k Linux, it'll work on any machine that runs m68k Linux. I don't usually like to think of the 680x0 Macs or even the Amiga as being in the same class as the Atari, but this is truly a case of being stronger together than apart. Programmers are certainly more willing to write for a userbase of all three platforms than for any one of them alone.

I hope that I can interest some of you not only in Linux for the Atari, but Linux in general. It's not as easy to use as TOS (what is?), but it is incredibly stable and flexible.

Drop me a line at joe@atari-users.net and let me know what you think about any of this. Lord knows that I don't want to keep prattling on about this if no one wants to hear it.

In the meantime, let's get to the news, hints, tips, and info available on the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Richard Kilpatrick asks about his "new" STE:

"I've just acquired an STE system (have yet to see which precise mods have been fitted, but it's 4Mb, HD Floppy, fast serial, TOS 2.06) and I want to use it for MIDI (there's a surprise, eh?). I can find patch editors and librarians for the Roland D10 LA synth, and 110 rackmount, but not for the D-50. Has anyone got experience of using a D-50 with the ST? I'll buy software to use it, anything to avoid having to hook my PC up to it!

I'm also looking for a Roland GS sound editor, for a JV-50 synth. This is more generic I think.

Finally, I have a spare CM8833Mk II monitor, and no display for my STe! Where can I get a cable for this?

Richard (also, will be very happy to be told about demos for the STe! I have loads for my XLs...)"

Tim Conrardy tells Richard:

"You can go to my site (http://atari.atlantis-bbs.com) and download Hybrid Arts GenEdit (now Freeware) which has a D-50 Template. Unfortunately, there are

no docs. I am trying to obtain some, or have someone write up a short Tutorial on it's use. However, you might be able to figure it out. I mostly use XOR which has a D-50 editor as well. Please Email Privately on this.

There is also C-Lab Explorer (now Freeware)which is available on the Atari-Midi FILE SECTION link on my page as well. Even though it is meant for D110 and MT32, I think I remember you can configure it for any of these instruments including the D-50.That is an excellent editor with great graphics .

Perhaps Gen Edit will do for the sound editor as well, as you can create your own templates.

You can get a Cable to use a regular VGA monitor on an ST at Best Electronics or Mario B.'s site. Go to my LINKS on my page, and you will find those plus more."

Jo Even Skarstein posts:

"I've spent a day of my sick leave soldering in 4Mb in one of my Stacys, but I need to know if it really works... Can anybody recommend a simple, but reliable memory tester?"

Jorgen Nyberg tells Jo Even:

"How about the HD-FREE cpx? It also shows used, available and total memory, maybe thats enough?"

Jo Even replies:

"I know that the RAM is recognized (I have 3.2Mb free with MagiC and STiNG loaded), but I need to check if it works properly."

Jorgen replies to Jo Even's reply:

"Sorry, can't help you there, but I almost suspected that it wasn't such a simple prob."

Mark Bedingfield jumps in and tells Jo Even:

"I found a program on the STE language disk that does the trick, used it for the same job. If you don't have it let me know."

That problem having been solved, Jo Even now asks:

"I bought a new mobile phone a couple of days ago (Siemens S35i), and I'm thinking of writing a small tool to create/convert logos for it. To do that I need to convert BMP to IMG and vice versa, does anybody know if there's a free implementation available?"

Martin-Eric Racine tells Jo Even:

"I was gonna say Imagecopy, but it's commercial. Gemview should
do it and the key is apparently free for the asking, nowadays."

Editor's note.... Go for ImageCopy... It's a spectacular program!

Jo Even tells Martin-Eric:

"I actually need the source, so none of these are an option. I have already
written a small tool to convert BMPs to a format S25Tool
(Palm-utility) can understand, but I'd like to make something more
flexible and user friendly."

Jorgen Nyberg pops in and interjects:

"Graftool maybe?"

Martin Byttebier says:

"Indeed Graftool can do this (both ways)

ftp://chapelie.rma.ac.be/atari/graph-tools/gt970907.lzh (222.568 bytes)
or http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/JJvB/

One can also try Nview
http://perso.wanadoo.fr/pierre.g/home.html
or ftp://chapelie.rma.ac.be/atari/graph-tools/nview280.zip (412.641 bytes)

Furthermore the excellent Looknsee (Zeigsmir) is also able to view BMP and
convert then to another format.
Looknsee is registerware. You need to write to the author in order to get
a registration key.

http://rosin-datentechnik.de/rosin-online/indexx.html (German version) "

Jean Lusetti adds:

"VISION is shareware (but full use of any feature) and can handle images
conversions in any supported format including BMP and IMG.
By the way, it is more efficient (for disk usage) to convert from BMP to
TIFF with LZW compression,especially if you have a 030 based machine.
Have a look at
http://vision.atari.org or http://www.multimania.com/jlusetti/indexe.htm "

Jared Falvo muses about Atari:

"According to a gaming magazine I just read, Hasbro *ONLY* paid $5 million
for Atari's entirety. This now means that a buy back is NOT outside the
realm of possibility. After all, the computer division surely is only one
small fragment of the whole, no?"

Shiuming Lai tells Jared:

"There's nothing left of the computer division. There may be
knowledge, but nothing that hasn't been far surpassed by now.
The people (and it's people that make a company) have all
moved on to other things, without them, there will be no new
development and innovation.

What on Earth would a buy-back achieve, when there's nothing (of significant magnitude to make a big impact in today's market) to buy back?? What has Hasbro done with Atari? Re-hashed some old games.

Atari doesn't mean squat to the millions of consumer sheep out there, and it's those you have to convince, not the handful of Atari users, many of whom don't spend a penny on their so-called hobby 'because on the PC it's free'."

Paul Nurminen asks about using 'VFAT' partitions:

"I've recently decided to start using VFAT for long file names on a couple of partitions of my hard drives on my Falcon. I'm running MagiC 5.11, and while I am able to set up any _one_ partition to support long file names, I can't seem to get it to do more than one.

I've correctly [as far as I can tell] edited the MAGX.INF file (as shown below):

```
#[vfat]
drives=N
#[vfat]
drives=G
```

I've also tried putting the two drive letters on the same line, separated by commas, or TABs (as shown below):

```
#[vfat]
drives=N,G

#[vfat]
drives=N	G
```

And I've tried switching the letters around, with "G" before "N" - which results in "G" showing the long file names and "N" _not_ showing them.

What am I doing wrong?"

James Haslam tells Paul:

"This is mine:

```
#[vfat]
drives=bdefghijklmnop
```

As you can see you don't need anything between the drive letters!"

Peter West adds his thoughts:

"Probably putting in spaces or other separators [is what you're doing wrong]. My magx.inf reads:

```
#[vfat]
drives=bgh
```

and this works fine. BTW it's worth making B: LFN-capable just in case you get a floppy from someone with LFNs - just stick it in the drive and select B:"

Louis Holleman adds:

"BTW, why not put in "A" as well for vfat? It doesn't hurt and you don't need to swap drives in case you get lfn's on a floppy. The only drive I don't use for vfat is C."

Henrik Gildå posts this about their new "winframe" for MagiC:

"Today we (Nature) felt the time was right to present our latest work. It's a winframe replacement for Magic 6.x, and you can have a look at it at our homepage: nature.atari.org, and then go to Projects/Natframe."

Mike Freeman tells Henrik:

"That's great, and it looks cool, but I can't find where to go to download it. No download link on either the "Nat-Frame" or "Download" pages, and I don't know where I would look at the FTP sites. Please tell us!"

Henrik tells Mike:

"It's unfortunately not available for download yet, but will be soon. We've just sent a beta-version to one of our testers, and if that goes well, it'll be up on our page shortly after. There are just some small "cosmetical" bugs that need fixing. NatFrame works alright as it is now, it's just not so pretty as we would like it to be."

Clayton Murray asks about CD-R disks:

"It's me AGAIN - with yet another question. I did include this in one of the followups, but I thought it best to start a new string with this.

Does anyone have any recommendations on brands of CD-R and CD-RW blank media. Any problems with any types or brands?

I'm using a Yamaha 8x4x24 CDRW with all Anodyne software (whenever I can get one of the retailers to take my order! Is everyone on vacation??) on a Falcon with Nemesis, TOS 4.04, ICD utilities."

Terry May tells Clayton:

"It really depends on your player, so it's best to experiment a little bit and see what works for YOU. For example, Memorex has gotten a bad rap in some circles, but I've had excellent luck with it."

Claes Holmerup adds:

"I have the same burner and like it a lot :)

I've used a couple of different burners during the years, but I've never experienced problems with other than the cheapest noname-CDR's, but even with them, it works most of the time. However, the cheapest disks often give you trouble when you want to replay audio-CD's in an audio CD-player - and there may be problems when trying to burn at higher speeds than 4X.

Keep to the well-known brands - but try others every once in a while - you may find a noname-"brand" that works very well.

For the moment, I use mostly Kodak and I haven't had any problems burning at 8X on my PC. The Falcon is another story since it can't handle the data quickly enough for 8X."

Well folks, that's it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Harry Potter Coming to Games!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" 'Seaman'! Songbird Is Moving!
Next Generation of Nintendo!
And much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Nintendo to Unveil New Game Players on August 24

Leading Japanese game maker Nintendo Co. Ltd. said on Wednesday it would unveil long-awaited details on August 24 of two key next-generation game machines due for launch late this year and early next year. The Kyoto-based company plans to launch the 128-bit video-game machine, code-named Dolphin, in 2001, a delay from its original target of late this year.

Investors and analysts are eager for specifics on Dolphin following the recent launch of rival next-generation consoles: Sony Corp.'s PlayStation2 released on March 4 and Sega Enterprises Ltd.'s Dreamcast which hit Japanese stores in late 1999.

Nintendo will also unveil the Gameboy Advance, a new version of the world's top-selling hand-held game player, which will feature a 32-bit processing unit and telecommunications functions.

The originally scheduled summer launch of the machine was delayed until late this year due to tight supplies of components.

Details of Mobile System GB, a device connecting Gameboys to mobile phones, will be also disclosed at the news conference, scheduled ahead of the Nintendo Spaceworld 2000 exhibition for fans, a Nintendo spokesman said.

The new Nintendo products are expected to mark the start of a full-blown battle in the highly competitive game industry, with U.S. software giant Microsoft Corp. scheduled to join the fray later in 2001 with its X-box console.

EA Games Gives Players the License to Drive Like James Bond in "007 Racing"

Thrill seekers wishing to drive like James Bond in all those exotic, gadget-filled cars will get their wish with the upcoming release of ‘‘007 Racing". The game will be published late this fall by Electronic Arts for the PlayStation game console.

‘‘007 Racing" stems from an exclusive multi-year worldwide licensing deal EA previously announced with MGM Interactive, Danjaq LLC and Eon Productions to develop, publish and distribute a series of interactive titles on multiple platforms based on the James Bond character. In addition to ‘‘007 Racing," EA is also developing an interactive title for multiple gaming platforms based on blockbuster movie ‘‘The World Is Not Enough."

‘‘007 Racing" allows both Bond and racing aficionados to test their mettle behind the wheels of some of the super spy’s most famous vehicles while executing action-filled missions inspired by memorable scenes from among the 19 blockbuster James Bond films.

Each vehicle in the game will carry a full complement of gadgets and weaponry from the Bond series of movies as well as new weapons that will help the player overcome the specific challenges of new missions. The arsenal, supplied by MI6’s ‘‘Q Branch", includes machine guns, surface-to-air missiles, spike and mine dispensers, rocket launchers, an oil slick generator, tire shredders and bulletproof windows. The vehicles will also feature four-point physics, which accentuate 007’s white-knuckled driving style and a progressive damage model that affects the look of the car and performance.

Key features in ‘‘007 Racing" will include:

* Being James Bond and getting behind the wheel of some of the most amazing autos in the world of James Bond.
* Famous vehicles from BMWfi and more modified by MI6’s Q Branch.
* More than 15 exciting missions inspired by famous Bond films, ranging from evasion to elimination.
* The ability to battle famous Bond movie villains.
* Diverse interactive levels set in Amsterdam, South America, Monte Carlo and New York.
* A full complement of Q lab weapons and gadgets.
* Dramatic 007-style physics and car damage.
* Hollywood-style pacing and special effects.
* Multiplayer support for exciting peer-to-peer action

Eutechnyx, an accomplished UK-based entertainment software developer, is developing ‘‘007 Racing." Electronic Arts will publish and distribute the PlayStation title worldwide in late 2000. More information on the James Bond games can be found on the Electronic Arts product web site at: http://007.ea.com.

Sega Introduces Seaman, the First Voice Recognition Videogame to Hit the U.S.

The evolution of Seaman is enough to make Darwin turn in his grave! Sega of America, Inc. announced the release of ‘‘Seaman" for the 128-bit, Internet-ready Sega Dreamcast videogame console. Debuting as the first console videogame to use voice recognition technology in the United States, Seaman challenges players to successfully care for and evolve a mysterious human and aquatic hybrid creature named ‘‘Seaman" by maintaining his habitat and conversing with him via a revolutionary microphone peripheral. Developed for Sega by Yoot Saito of Vivarium and featuring narration by Leonard Nimoy, ‘‘Seaman" has cultivated a fascinating new style of interactive gaming that reflects the innovative vision of Sega’s developers. As testament, Seaman is the No. 1 selling Dreamcast title of all time in Japan.

With more than 12,000 lines of dialogue, the ability to recall past conversations, and the player’s objective to uncover the mystery of Seaman’s origins through real-time conversations, Seaman is paving the way for artificial intelligence in electronic entertainment. Depending on variables such as the age, gender, relationship status and occupation of the user, Seaman will have different comments and responses. Since he has an extensive memory, users might find themselves revisiting topics and events. Only by interacting with Seaman to help him evolve, will gamers ultimately discover the mystery behind his existence.

Given his dependency on interaction, users must approach Seaman with the intent of cultivating a relationship with him. This requires at least 10 minutes of interaction a day for almost a month.

‘‘With ’Seaman’s’ voice recognition technology and unusual premise, Sega is continuing to break new ground with its content," said Stacey Kerr, product manager, Sega of America. ‘‘The engaging and offbeat Seaman is uncontestable proof that Sega continues to be the home of the most entertaining and ground-breaking games."

Leonard Nimoy, the game’s narrator, serves as a guide for the user providing daily tips regarding Seaman’s evolution and clues to solving his mystery. Each day, gamers will prepare a tank by adjusting the oxygen, heat and light settings for Seaman, who is dependant on the gamer for its life-blood.

A close eye on the food supply and a regular feeding schedule are also very important to the foster care of Seaman. Throughout the course of the game, players will discover that his occasionally insolent disposition and irreverent responses to questions are a true reflection of his feelings and how he’s been treated. A dirty habitat, low temperature and poor lighting are sure to make for a grumpy Seaman.

Habitat conditions and proper nutrients aren’t the only things the offbeat Seaman needs in order to survive and prosper. Interaction with Seaman is required daily since it is crucial to his growth and well-being. If Seaman is neglected or held out of water for too long, he may take on a crude demeanor and refuse to respond to the user’s disembodied hand tapping on the monitor or voice commands. Interesting conversation, good interaction, occasional tickling and proper care will result in a harmonious relationship with the shameless Seaman.

Players depend on the Visual Memory Unit (VMU) to store game data and for information on Seaman’s status. The VMU can act as a player’s insight into Seaman’s mood, as well. An exclamation point displayed on the VMU means that Seaman is attentive, while a question mark indicates that he is ready to receive questions.

‘‘Seaman," which includes the microphone peripheral, is available for $49.95 at retailers nationwide and at www.sega.com.

Electronic Arts Plans Potter Games

The Harry Potter craze is soon to go interactive.

Electronic Arts Inc. said Thursday it has received exclusive worldwide rights to develop, publish and distribute computer and video games based on J.K. Rowling’s hugely successful Harry Potter books.

Financial terms of the deal with Time Warner Inc.’s Warner Brothers unit were not disclosed.

California-based Electronic Arts said it plans to publish games based on all four Harry Potter books, an upcoming feature film, and any subsequent films

‘‘EA has accepted the challenge to create a series of interactive games that reflect the incredible imagination of J.K. Rowling’s books," said Don Mattrick, president of EA worldwide studios.

‘‘We are extremely excited to become part of the Harry Potter phenomenon by bringing our own brand of interactive magic to this fantastic series."

The company said it will work closely with Rowling so that the games remain true to the books’ characters and environments.

The license grants EA the right to develop and publish products for all current and next generation video game consoles and handheld platforms. It can also publish and distribute games designed to be played online over the Internet.

The Harry Potter book series has been published in 115 countries and in 28 languages.

The latest book, ‘‘Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," is the fourth in the series by 34-year-old British author.

Acclaim’s ECW Anarchy Rulz for PlayStation Body Slams On to Store Shelves Tuesday, August 15

Acclaim Entertainment announced that ECW Anarchy Rulz for the PlayStation game console will be in retail outlets nationwide on Tuesday, August 15. The game is named after Extreme Championship Wrestling’s (ECW) annual pay-per-view spectacular, Anarchy Rulz, and follows ECW’s first-ever video game title, ECW Hardcore Revolution.

ECW Anarchy Rulz features all-new control mechanics for easy pick-up-and-play action. The game has over 60 of the most hardcore wrestlers, including the ECW debut of ‘‘The American Dream" Dusty Rhodes, The Sandman, and the Executive Producer of ECW Paul Heyman, joining the rest of ECW’s outrageous stars. New match modes include Street Fight, Table Match and the explosive Brimstone Match. And for the first time, ECW Anarchy Rulz’ Stable Mode allows players to handpick their own allies and adversaries to battle through career mode.

The audio in ECW Anarchy Rulz leads the wrestling genre. Licensed music cuts include ‘‘Debonaire" by Dope and ‘‘Holy Man" by One Minute Silence. All wrestlers feature their own recorded voice packages for extreme realism. Plus, there is double trouble in the broadcast booth featuring the ‘‘voice of ECW" Joey Styles and the ‘‘Quintessential Stud Muffin" Joel Gertner.

Acclaim’s ground breaking Create-a-Pay-Per-View, Create-A-Wrestler and Career Modes have been greatly enhanced for even greater customization including belt defenses, where players can lock up head-to-head in Championship Title matches.

‘‘We are pleased to bring hardcore wrestling fans the next installment of Extreme Championship Wrestling video games," commented Kevin Brannan, brand manager at Acclaim. ‘‘ECW Anarchy Rulz’ all-new control system, new wrestlers, matches and game modes are sure to appeal to wrestling fans everywhere."

ECW Anarchy Rulz is developed by the video game industry’s most experienced wrestling design team, Acclaim Studios-Salt Lake City. ECW Anarchy Rulz is rated Teen by the ESRB.

Gigex.com and Gathering of Developers Announce Immediate Availability of the ’KISS: Psycho Circus’ Demo and the KISS ’Final Farewell Sweepstakes’

Gigex.com and Gathering of Developers today announced the immediate availability of the ‘‘KISS Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child" demo for the recently released PC title and the upcoming SEGA Dreamcast version due in late September. Everyone who downloads the demo can register for the ‘‘Final Farewell Sweepstakes" and a chance to win tickets, backstage passes and lodging to the final KISS show in the lower 48 states ever! The demo is available for download at

http://www.gigex1.com/F0070000003/pr/kiss_demo.htm and
http://www.gigex.com/top50.htm

‘‘KISS: Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child" straps 3D gamers into a high-paced trip through a twisted world of horror inspired by the KISS legacy, conceived by the imagination of Todd McFarlane and brought to digital life by Third Law Interactive. Powered by a highly modified Lithtech 1.5, the Psycho Circus holds some 25 twisted freaks, 12 bone-smashing weapons, 16 ancient artifacts, scripted in-game cinematics, a slew of boss and mini-boss encounters, high voltage deathmatch and four playable characters. To go from stranded mortal to all powerful Elder you must attain six progressive levels of power and master each character’s unique set of challenges and abilities. But beware, the path to the Nightmare Child’s lair is lined with more monsters on-screen than any

previous first-person shooter.

‘‘We hope KISS fans and gamers alike are excited about the demo and the chance to meet some of Rock & Roll’s greatest living legends" said Gathering of Developers CEO Mike Wilson. ‘‘The demo is great and Gathering has a real winner on their hands. We’re happy to be a part of this great game," said Gigex CEO Mark Friedler.

Sega.com Announces Beta Test Program

Sega.com, Inc. (www.sega.com), a leading online interactive entertainment company for gamers, today announced that the company is looking for more than 100 hardcore Sega Dreamcast gamers to beta test its new high-speed online gaming service, SegaNet, which is scheduled for launch in September.

The chosen few will have the coolest jobs in town. Between August 21 and 29, they will be asked to play Dreamcast games across SegaNet against fellow gamers nationwide. In addition to test-driving the first console-based Internet multiplayer gaming service and reporting their findings back to Sega.com, beta testers will be eligible to win numerous prizes to be awarded throughout the test period.

‘‘We are looking hardcore gamers, people who can put SegaNet through its paces and tell us how we can make the experience even better," said Lynn MacConnell, chief technology officer of Sega.com. ‘‘Our beta testers will help us revolutionize the gaming industry and will play an essential part in SegaNet’s mission to take gaming into the 21st century, which is fully-immersive online console gameplay."

Dreamcast gamers are invited to sign up for the beta test program on Wednesday, August 9, 2000. Applications will be available online at www.sega.com. To qualify, applicants must be at least 18 years old and willing to sign (and abide by) a nondisclosure agreement. The 100 lucky beta testers will be selected at random and asked to play various titles for several hours between August 21 and 29. The beta program is not available to members of the media or professionals in the gaming industry.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
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Songbird Is Moving!

Songbird Productions is moving to a new location effective immediately. The new address is:

Songbird Productions
1736 Chippewa Drive NW
Rochester, MN 55901

Please update your records appropriately. Any orders already in transit to the old address should be forwarded correctly by the US Post Office, but as always feel free to inquire via email with any questions on a current order.

Sincerely,

Carl Forhan
Songbird Productions
http://songbird.atari.net

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Netscape Bug Affects Almost 1,000

Security experts were warning Internet users Monday about a security hole in Netscape's Web browser that has already infected almost 1,000 computers.

Once a computer is infected, a hacker can click through the victim's computer and see, run and delete files on the target computer. The method, dubbed ''Brown Orifice" in a reference to the popular hacker tool BackOrifice, has been making the rounds of computer security mailing lists and bulletin boards over the weekend.

Netscape has not yet made a remedy available, but are working on the problem.

''Netscape takes all security issues very seriously," said Netscape spokesman Andrew Weinstein, ''We're working to quickly evaluate and address this concern."

The person who posted the code, who identified himself as Dan Brumleve, also posted a sample bit of computer code on his Web site that can be modified for more malicious purposes and a list of some of the users who have been infected.

This list is being used by other hackers, said computer security expert Chris Rouland of Internet Security Systems, making those infected computers open to anyone who wants to click through their wide-open hard drives.

''As of (Monday) morning," Rouland said,"965 people have it loaded."

It's common practice to make dangerous code public, so that security professionals can better prepare themselves to defend against the code. ISS said that information about the security hole had also appeared on several popular Web sites such as Slashdot, an online community of users of the Linux operating system.

‘‘It can be assumed that knowledge of the exploit, its source code, and variations are widespread," ISS said in a press release.

However, there is still no remedy available from Netscape. Atlanta-based ISS, which analyzed the security hole, advises Netscape users to disable the Java programming language in their browser. Netscape, owned by America Online, suggested the same temporary workaround.

Both ISS and Netscape officials noted that business users, because they’re protected by the company’s network firewall, are not vulnerable.

Rouland said Brown Orifice is especially dangerous because it’s easy to modify, and can be changed into a self-copying virus form - as opposed to the current infection method, where a victim visits a Web site that includes the malicious code.

‘‘The bar’s been lowered for any script-kiddie to modify this code and make it even more malicious," Rouland said.

Netscape Communicator versions 4.74 and earlier are affected, Rouland said. Microsoft Internet Explorer users and users of the Mozilla pre-release version of the new Netscape browser 6.0 are not vulnerable to this problem.

Rouland noted that Microsoft users who have switched to Netscape - a company whose history includes the earliest Web browsers - after the recent stream of Microsoft-related security holes in Internet Explorer and the Outlook and Outlook Express e-mail programs are finding that no computer programs are without problems.

Also on Monday, another security expert pointed out a security hole in Microsoft’s Word and Excel products that can let a hacker take over the victim’s computer. Microsoft officials said they are working on the issue.

‘‘The vendor-changing strategy obviously doesn’t work," he said. ‘‘Security coding practices are being ignored by even one of the Internet’s oldest companies."

Juno Battling For No. 2 ISP Position

The next big fight in the Internet service provider space is over the 100 million Internet users that are expected to come online in the next five years. And while any large consumer ISP would tell you its real competitor is America Online, the true showdown in the exploding Internet access space will likely take place between Juno Online Services and EarthLink.

Juno, the first service provider to give consumers free e-mail, has changed a great deal since its launch in April 1996. Today, the company commands a universe of 10 million users, only 3.38 million of which are active. Juno offers Internet access for free with ads - and for a fee without them - and has lined up an array of broadband services expected to be heavily marketed this year.

On top of selling broadband access through satellite, Digital Subscriber Line and wireless partnerships, Juno captured headlines last week by becoming the first ISP to be picked by Time Warner for distribution over its cable network.

Organic growth is not the only strategy that Juno plans to execute, however.

"One of the things we are looking at very seriously is consolidation," said Charles Ardai, Juno's president and chief executive. "There's something like 5,000 Internet access providers in the country right now, and we don't think that is going to last.

At this point in the game, EarthLink has 3.7 million customers, a base that generates $230.9 million per quarter. From EarthLink's perspective, however, Juno is not exactly a worthwhile competitor.

"How many paid users do they have?" asked Kirsten Hamlin, vice president of investor relations at EarthLink. "With 730,000 dial-up subscribers, I don't know where to place them - Prodigy [Communications] is 2.7 million. We base it on paying subscribers, but if you want to base it on [number of] eyeballs, then you would put it on par with NetZero - and, incidentally, why would you name your company after where your stock is going?"

In terms of numbers of eyeballs, Juno does have a lead over EarthLink, being 22nd in Media Metrix's top 50, with EarthLink trailing at No. 25.

Could Juno become the next big thing in the ISP space? Industry analysts believe Juno has a shot at the big time. The key to its success is in understanding how free Internet access works, and harnessing its power to appeal to the next generation of Internet users, industry analysts said.

"Free is the only way we are adding real growth in the U.S., a mature IP [Internet Protocol] services market," said Hilary Mine, vice president of research at Probe Research. "Once we have wireless devices that are meaningful, that would be another way to grow that."

Free access is the fastest growing segment of the online services market. Probe estimated that about 10 percent of consumers and small businesses in America dial in to the Internet via free on-ramps. About 700,000 of Juno's subscribers pay for their access, and there are broadband deals that could generate subscription fees, but the bulk of the users on Juno network dial in for free.

Juno made $29.6 million in revenue in the second quarter, losing $42.9 million. Its shares took a nosedive on the results and analysts downgrades.

AOL Takes Down Music Search Engine

America Online Inc. on Thursday pulled the plug on a search engine for digital music in the popular MP3 format, which the recording industry says has become a vehicle for piracy.

''We don't have an efficient process for distinguishing between legal and illegal MP3s, so we decided to take it down until we can address that," said AOL spokesman Jim Whitney.

The search engine was located on a site belonging to Nullsoft, an AOL subsidiary that created and distributes Winamp, a popular MP3 player program for Windows.

Dulles, Va.-based AOL has agreed to acquire Time Warner Inc. which has an array of record labels.

The site did not store the MP3 files, but the search engine could point to other Web sites containing music files.

On Thursday morning, the Search button was still active on Nullsoft's site, but only returned this message when clicked: ''Sorry. Search unavailable at this time. Sad, sad Nullsoft."

It's not the first time Nullsoft has sent its parent company scrambling. Nullsoft programmers also created Gnutella, a file-sharing program similar to Napster, which lets users easily exchange files including digital music. The program was briefly posted on Nullsoft's Web site in March and has subsequently spread on the Internet.

Nullsoft's Web site proclaims that they are ''legitimate nihilistic media terrorists as history will no doubt canonize us."

Other Web search engines, such as AltaVista and Lycos' Hotbot, still allow searches for MP3 files.

Women Surpass Men Online

Women are now in the majority online.

In May, 50.4 percent of U.S. Internet users were women, Media Metrix said Wednesday. That's still below the percentage of women in the overall U.S. population, which according to Census figures is 51.1 percent.

The study was based on Media Metrix measurements of more than 55,000 home and business users.

Among other findings:

-Teen-age girls represent the fastest-growing age group. There were more than 4.4 million girls ages 12-17 online in May, a 126 percent increase from about 2 million a year earlier.

-The number of women ages 18-24 online decreased 4.5 percent, possibly indicating more interest in college and early career development, researchers said.

-The number of female Internet users ages 55 and over grew by 110 percent, though they represent only 4.4 percent of the overall online population.

-Across all age groups, America Online, Microsoft and Yahoo! sites were most popular among women. Those were also the sites most frequented by men.

Microsoft Launches E-Book Software; Big Shift Seen

Microsoft launched free software for electronic books on Tuesday in a move publishers called a turning point for the book industry.

The new Reader software and Microsoft’s marketing muscle were linked to the launch by Barnesandnoble.com Inc. of electronic book sales, a first for a major online bookseller.

Dick Brass, vice president for technology development at Microsoft, said the Reader software marked the inevitable decline of traditional printed books.

Likening the software to the revolutionary start of mass-produced automobiles a century ago, Brass told a news conference, ‘‘This is 1908 in the automobile industry.

‘‘We think we’ve got a working vehicle and the journey has begun."

The Reader software allows books to be read on personal computers and laptops. It can be downloaded for free.

The Barnesandnoble.com store features Reader technology. Its books will be available for downloading and reading on a screen or in single paperback copies printed on demand.

The Microsoft and Barnesandnoble.com move comes as publishers, booksellers and readers try to map out the unknown territory of digital books.

Horror story writer Stephen King has marked a electronic path in recent months by offering a novella online through his publisher, Simon & Schuster, a Viacom Inc.

Last month he bypassed publishers altogether by peddling a novel, ‘‘The Plant," in installments at his Web site.

Top publishing executives at the news conference said the Reader product from Microsoft, the world’s biggest personal computer software maker, heralded a new era for readers as well as a potential new avenue of profits.

‘‘This is probably the biggest opening we’ve gotten in my lifetime because of all the content waiting to get into the pipeline," said Steve Riggio, vice chairman of Barnesandnoble.com.

Laurence Kirshbaum, chairman and chief executive of Time Warner Inc.’s Trade Publishing unit, said the new medium could boost book industry growth from its current level of 5 to 6 percent a year into double digits.

Microsoft is backing the online bookstore in part through an advertising campaign and will pay authors and publishers for the right to advertise their books with its software.

Microsoft will get ‘‘a very small, single-digit royalty" from the sale of electronic books, Brass said.

Microsoft and the Association of American Publishers also said they planned to work together closely to fight electronic book piracy.

Microsoft, which is a member of the association, said in a statement it would provide technology to identify illegal content on the Internet and back the effort financially.

Internet Porn Law Barred in Virginia

A federal judge has barred Virginia from enforcing a law intended to protect children from ‘‘harmful" Internet material.

The law makes it a crime to use the Internet to sell or otherwise provide sexually explicit pictures or written material to juveniles that could harm them.

U.S. District Judge J. Harry Michael Jr. ruled Tuesday that the law violates the First Amendment.

The nonprofit group People for the American Way and 16 Internet businesses had challenged the law, arguing that the companies had no practical way to prevent juveniles from seeing such material except to eliminate it altogether.

Elliot Mincberg, legal director of People for the American Way, said material including art and sex education information that would be proper for adults could fall victim to the law.

Attorney general’s spokesman David Botkins said Wednesday that Michael’s ruling was under review and no decision had been made on whether to appeal.

Aides to Gov. Jim Gilmore said they hadn’t seen the ruling and declined comment.

The law was passed in 1999 over Gilmore’s objection. No one has been charged under the law, which carries a maximum sentence of a year in jail and a $2,500 fine.

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